

BROWNDALÉ'S ARRANGEMENTS WITH MINISTRY

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Mr. R. F. Nixon: I should probably ask the same minister if she is prepared, on a policy basis, to table the financial dealings and contractual arrangements with Browndale National and/or Browndale Ontario which, according to a Globe and Mail report, is doing business with the Ministry of Health to the extent of \$6.5 million for the provision of care and assistance for emotionally disturbed children in this province and many other groups as well.

An hon. member: It should be investigated.

Hon. Mrs. Birch: Mr. Speaker, I think that question should be more properly directed to the Minister of Health.

Mr. R. F. Nixon: With your permission, Mr. Speaker, I would so direct it.

Hon. Mr. Miller: Mr. Speaker, the article in the Globe and Mail elaborated a number of points about the method of financing and the operation of the Browndale homes. There are many things to be taken into account. Within the last year the ministry has put Browndale on a per diem, per patient basis. The average daily rate is certainly nowhere near the maximum we pay for such operations.

Mr. R. F. Nixon: What is that rate, \$59?

Hon. Mr. Miller: It's \$59.26 including all costs -- for day care and other types of care, for occupancy costs and so on. The highest rate, I believe, we are paying is somewhere in the range of \$92 on a per diem basis to a private institution. But it's very difficult to compare one operation with another because of the entirely different types of care being given to children suffering from different mental illnesses. Suffice it to say we have some 300 children being treated by the Browndale organization, many of whom have been rejected for treatment by other organizations

in the province; our staff continue to watch the operation with interest and to this point they are satisfied with it.

Mr. R. F. Nixon: A supplementary, with your permission: Is the minister prepared to table the contract and the financial negotiations over the last two to three years with Browndale? Could I ask further if there is any contemplation of the provision of these services on a public basis rather than through a private, although non-profit, organization?

Hon. Mr. Miller: Of course, children's mental health services, Mr. Speaker, are provided on a public basis in a number of areas in the province, through a number of hospitals and other public organizations. It's only, I believe, some four or five years since the Ministry of Health passed the Children's Mental Health Act and started to unify the very disparate methods of treatment which were being given by many organizations, voluntary and otherwise. I don't feel I would be able to table the information the member is asking for.

Mr. R. F. Nixon: A supplementary: Would the figures indicate --

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for York South with a supplementary.

Mr. D. C. MacDonald (York South): A supplementary: Would the minister be able to indicate, what is the range of per diem costs in the public institutions which are treating children?

Mr. J. H. Jessiman (Fort William): A red herring!

Mr. MacDonald: Not a red herring but relevant.

Hon. Mr. Miller: I can give that to the hon. member.

Mr. Lewis: What is it at Thistletown for example?

Hon. Mr. Miller: That's a government-operated one on a non-profit basis. There is no use comparing it.

Mr. Lewis: What is the minister talking about? It's the public sector.

Mr. Cassidy: What does it cost?

Hon. Mr. Miller: I think one could obtain that through the estimates. I don't have it here.

Mr. Lewis: He doesn't have Thistletown?

Hon. Mr. Miller: The lowest I see on the list here is \$42.53 per day; the highest I see on the list is \$92.77 per day.

Mr. Lewis: Those are not the public ones the minister was talking about, are they?

Mr. MacDonald: What would the median cost be?

Hon. Mr. Miller: I'd have to work that out for the hon. member. Even the straight daily costs are not necessarily comparable because they don't always include the same types of service. Therefore, I think trying to average these at this point in time would be meaningless unless we looked at the age group being treated, how many of them were inpatients versus outpatients, and so on and so forth.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for St. George had a supplementary, I believe.

Mrs. Campbell: Yes, Mr. Speaker. In view of the fact that Thistletown has been cut back in the amount that it requires and in view of the fact that the Clarke Institute has had to close its beds, does this mean that there is a new policy with this ministry that we will transfer children over to Browndale rather than keep them in the government facility?

Hon. Mr. Miller: Mr. Speaker, first of all, that is one of those great distortions of the truth.

Mr. R. F. Nixon: What is?

Hon. Mr. Miller: There was no such thing as the so-called cutback in Thistletown, only a reduction from their request to what we would give them. It happens that Thistletown got the greatest percentage increase in budget of any institution under my ministry this year. Period.

Mr. Lewis: Tell us about their per diem. How much over \$100 a day is it? Tell us about Thistletown.

Mrs. Campbell: May I have the answer to my question, Mr. Speaker. Is there a new policy?

Hon. Mr. Miller: I am asking myself.

Mr. Lewis: Okay, good.

Mr. R. F. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, I know he has probably had enough of this, but did the minister say there were 300 patients in the care of Browndale?

Hon. Mr. Miller: That is the approximate number.

Mr. R. F. Nixon: And we are picking up \$21,000 a year for each?

Hon. Mr. Miller: That could well be.

Mr. P. J. Yakabuski (Renfrew South): Who are the directors?

Mr. H. Worton (Wellington South): Public enterprise is doing okay.

Hon. Mr. Miller: First of all, I think there were 314 at one point recently, but 300 is the basis upon which it is paid.

Let's get one thing clear. I am interested in the quality of care and the cost of that care. Whether it is provided by a private person or a government agency is not of consequence to me. I am interested in the best care at the lowest possible cost.

Mr. R. F. Nixon: Supplementary: Since the minister is concerned with the best care at the lowest --

Mr. Speaker: This is surely developing into a debate. In any event, the hon. member for Scarborough West is next.

Mr. Lewis: I wanted just to ask the minister this: Surely all the figures that relate to the various institutions, whether under the Children's Mental Health Centres Act or whether a government operation as a psychiatric wing like Thistletown, are available to the members of the House through estimates and through discussion. Why then would the minister hesitate in dealing with them?

Hon. Mr. Miller: I didn't believe I was really hesitating.

Mr. Lewis: They are all funded by the ministry, aren't they?

Hon. Mr. Miller: Which one did I hesitate on?

Mr. Lewis: I think that is the only way to deal with them.

Hon. Mr. Miller: On tabling the contracts, I think that's an entirely different thing.

Mr. Lewis: Why?

Mr. R. F. Nixon: It is the cost.

Interjections by hon. members.

Hon. Mr. Miller: No, it is not. It's a per diem contract.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Scarborough West, a new question?